

DISCOVER VAIL

2025 Vail Family Tip Sheet

A family trip to Vail in the summer means something for everyone. From special events to free daily offerings as well as hiking, biking, fishing and rafting, every member of the family will find something fun to do. Here is a snapshot of activities and places for families to experience during a summer stay in Vail.

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

Epic Discovery

Summer in the mountains has taken on a whole new feel with Epic Discovery. Vail Resorts' Epic Discovery program, in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and Nature Conservancy, encourages "learn through play," promoting environmental education and forest stewardship through a variety of outdoor activities and interpretive programming. The company works closely with the Nature Conservancy to bring scientific content to the eco-discovery experiences and contributes one percent of all summer lift ticket and activity revenue toward forest restoration projects. Vail Mountain was the first destination in the Vail Resorts family to launch Epic Discovery in 2016. The primary components include:

- Learn-through-Play Elements: Integrated with trails and activities around the mountain, these interpretive experiential elements provide guests with hands-on information and activities about forest health, wildlife and the mountain geography of the White River National Forest.
- Forest Flyer™: An alpine coaster that runs on raised rails, the Forest Flyer™ winds its way down the mountain, following the natural contours of the landscape through the forest.
- Expanded Trail System: Comprehensive interpretive and directional signage has been integrated to encourage more hiking and trail exploration across Vail Mountain.



Epic Discovery is designed to connect both kids and adults with our national forests in an active, fun and engaging way, offering guests a unique opportunity to try new outdoor activities, challenge themselves physically, discover an appreciation for nature and create lasting family memories.

Lionshead Skate Park

The Lionshead Skate Park includes a half pipe and mini bowl, rails and other skating features. The park, originally proposed by local high school sophomore Cameron Chaney and designed by California Skateparks, also showcases four mosaic murals by artist Valerie Theberge. She created large compositions inspired by skating, which are installed on each side of both stair towers. The skate park is an attractive and inviting space for all guests and residents of Vail.

Hike with a Llama

Paragon Guides' participatory approach to guiding provides individuals and families a true sense of personal involvement in their adventure experience. Paragon's guides are carefully chosen on the basis



of their outdoor background, personalities, and genuine love of the wilderness. Explore Colorado's high country, from Paragon Guides' unique Take a Llama to Lunch to extended hikes into the surrounding mountain valleys. Alpine views, waterfalls and wildflowers await outdoor enthusiasts. Trails can be found throughout the Vail Valley including the Eagle's Nest and Holy Cross Wilderness Areas. More aggressive hiking to a spectacular Colorado peak or a high alpine ridge are great options. All hikes are designed with each group's interests and ability levels in mind.

Vail Kids Adventure Games – August 7-10

The Kids Adventure Games returns offering kids ages 6-14 a race of a lifetime featuring river tubing, ziplines, cargo nets, obstacles, rappelling, mud-pits, hiking, biking and more. The games are considered to be one of the coolest kids races on the planet. Featuring an obstacle-adventure course set in picturesque locations around the country, in teams of two, kids bike and trek a 3+ mile course while encountering both natural and manmade obstacles. In addition to the race, there is a Family Adventure Zone with interactive recreational activities put on by sponsors, including climbing walls, slack lines, cheer card stations, and more. Prior to the race, a skills clinic is offered by local experts giving participants the opportunity to learn skills necessary for the race and build confidence with their teammates.

INTERACTIVE NATURE ACTIVITIES

Vail Nature Center

A farmhouse perched between a mountain meadow and the forested bank of Gore Creek houses the Vail Nature Center. This seven-acre facility in the heart of Vail is a tranquil gem filled with easy walking trails, bird-watching, and beautiful scenery. Visit the interpretive center for hands-on nature exhibits or to join the many programs guided by knowledgeable naturalists. From bird walks, wildflower walks and beaver pond tours to full and half-day backcountry hikes, there is something for every age and interest. Camp Eco Fun is heaven for children ages four to 11 while they learn and explore Vail's flora and fauna. Classes covering special topics such as nature art, stargazing, photography and fly fishing are available every week throughout the summer. The Vail Nature Center is open seven days per week Memorial Day weekend through the end of September.

Walking Mountains Science Center Interactive Programs, Camps and Outings

The mission of Walking Mountains Science Center is to awaken a sense of wonder and inspire environmental stewardship and sustainability through natural science education. As a 501-3c non-profit science learning center, the Center offers innovative school programs, summer youth science camps, adult seminars and year-round interpretive programs.

The Betty Ford Alpine Gardens

Enjoy the highest botanical gardens in the world with a unique collection of alpine, sub-alpine and other mountain plants and flowers. Open from dawn to dusk daily through September with tours, children's programs and many other daily activities.

- **NEW! Habitats Exhibit** – An interactive exhibit through Ford Park featuring more than four habitats such as Bugs and Bees, Birds, Beavers and more. The exhibit explore the critical need for varied habitats, how interconnected and fragile they are and what can be done to protect them. The experience showcases art and the unique habitats through the gardens and

landscapes of the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens. The exhibit was developed by the Smithsonian Gardens and made available by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service and Discover Vail.

- **Special for Kids! Garden’s Scavenger Hunt** - A self-guided treasure hunt leads you from letterbox to letterbox through the garden. Pick up treasure hunt cards at the Schoolhouse between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. and stamp your card at each station until you have completed all the clues.

RAINY DAY ACTIVITIES

The Imagination Station

The Imagination Station is a hands-on family discovery zone open year-round with several features to inspire experimental play. It is designed for children of all ages and their families. The adjacent community programming room offers activities such as Paint Your Own Pottery, virtual reality, and art and science projects! Vail’s Imagination Station is conveniently located above the Vail Welcome Center at the southwest end of the Lionshead parking structure. It is accessible via the Lionshead stop on the in-town Vail Village/Lionshead bus.

Colorado Snowsports Museum

Located on the 3rd level of the Vail Village parking structure adjacent to the famous Covered Bridge, the museum is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about topics like the Winter Olympics, the history of Vail and the 10th Mountain Division.

SPORTS

Summer Sports Camps

Throughout the summer, the Vail Recreation District hosts an array of youth sports camps including volleyball, lacrosse, golf, ice hockey, soccer, gymnastics, figure skating, baseball and basketball, plus sports training camps. Additionally, during the spring and fall, the VRD manages a youth soccer league for ages four through 13.

JUST FOR FUN

Children’s Fountain

Children of all ages can be found splashing around in their swimsuits cooling off after a hot summer afternoon. The Children’s Fountain is located in front of Fuzzywig’s Candy Factory in the heart of Vail Village.

Playgrounds

Burn off energy at one of many Vail playgrounds such as Ford Park, Pirate Ship Park, Donovan Park, Bighorn Park – each is different. Each playground has a signature piece of interactive art created by a variety of artists. Recently, *Travel + Leisure Online* recognized Lionshead’s Sunbird Park for its architecture and design in the “World’s Coolest Playgrounds” article.

For a full list of family-friendly activities and events in Vail, please visit DiscoverVail.com



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